

BLOOD MONEY—

One of the Exploits of Don Q.

By H. Hesketh Prichard

THE action of Don Manuelo Ruiz, the civil governor of Castelleno, when he had sent Ramon Fuentes the bull fighter, to join Don Q.'s band and then to take some opportunity of murdering him was bitterly resented by the brigand chief. As he said himself, he had many enemies. Against the civil guard and against those who met him face to face he had no enemy at all, but for anything that savored of treachery, and more especially of treachery which necessitated for its

success the help of the governor. It was after dinner two nights later, and the governor had dined well. He was now engaged in smoking one of those brown cigarettes much doctored with saltpeter, which have their mouthpieces touched with some sweet substance, and which are so popular in Spain. Old Urcano had just brought the coffee, when once more he entered and said that a priest wished to have audience of his excellency.

"No, no," cried Don Manuelo. "I cannot be disturbed at this hour." The holy father made his apology, said the old servant, "and feared that would be the case. He said if it were so, I was to hand this to your excellency."

He passed across a little piece of paper, a corner as it were, that might have been torn off a document. The governor stared at it.

"You will bring the holy father in here at once," said he. A moment later a little, fragile-looking priest limped into the room. "Permit me to introduce myself,

"You understand your orders?"

Isabelilla, but you will do well to remember that I am Father Sebastian, and that the name of brigand Don Q. terrified me. Now, where is Robledo?

A moment later the young mountaineer stood before the chief.

"Who are you?" cried the governor, and his ears pricked up at the sound of the name.

"As to who I am have you forgotten the priest of Encero who sings mass for those who die in the mountains? and to how I came here, there is the plaza, and the plaza has wooden supports, and for man of my age I am very active, dear Don Manuelo."

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"You understand your orders?"

"Yes, yes," said the priest, "and then we'll go to the plaza."

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